(C) Revision of Research Rules

(3) Resolution by Dr. G.S. Dikshit

"Immediate steps may be taken to revise and update the research rules of the National Archives of India for affording proper facilities to researchers, at the same time keeping in view the security of its holdings, and the State Record Offices may be requested to follow the same rules with only such modifications as are required to suit local conditions."

Explanatory note

Many of the Ministries have thrown open most of their records till the end of 1945. For research in Modern Indian History, however, the dividing line between open and closed period should be 15th August 1947 for obvious reasons. It would be, therefore, necessary to persuade the various government agencies in this respect and incorporate their decisions in the research rules. The present rules provide supply of 10 documents to a scholar at a time. It is noticed, however, that many requisitioned documents are not actually transferred to the Archives. The rules, therefore, should be that a scholar may be free to requisition a minimum number of 30 documents of which only 10 may be supplied to him at a time. Many conventions have grown up in respect of typing and other kinds of assistance to scholars, consultation of 'closed' period records, duplication of records, change of topics by scholars etc. Since these are not mentioned in the rules, it causes considerable inconvenience to

scholars. While it may not be possible to cover every kind of situation that arises, it is advisable to have definite rules covering as many of them as possible.

Standing Committee's views:

The Commission has been fully seized of the problem of enforcing uniformity in the rules governing access to the records of the Government of India and the State Governments. Following Resolution No. XVII of the 37th Session of the Commission, held in 1966, recommending that "All records in the custody of the Union and State Governments which are more than 30 years old should be opened to bonafide researchers", the Commission at its 38th session held in 1967, reiterated (vide Resolution V) the need for all the State Governments to frame rules governing access to their records in conformity with those in force in the National Archives of India. The replies received from the State Governments about the progress made in this behalf were again discussed at the 40th, 41st and 42nd Sessions of the Commission held in 1970, 1971 and 1973 respectively. The Chairman of the Standing Committee addressed the Chief Secretaries of State Governments to secure implementation of these Resolutions. The Commission at its 43rd Session held in 1975 also reiterated (vide Resolution VI) that immediate steps should be taken by all the State Archives to declare open their respective records up to December 1945 to bona fide research scholars. The resolution was forwarded to all the State Governments/ Union Territories. The Governments of Tamil Nadu, West

Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Kerala, Maharashtra, Goa, Daman and Diu, Delhi and Pondicherry have thrown open their records more than 30 years old to the bona fide research scholars, while in Karnataka 35 years old records are open for research.

As regards access to the records of the Government of India, subject to certain limitations, 30 years old records are open to bona fide research scholars. Records relating to Kashmir have now been thrown open for research upto 31st December, 1924. The question of relaxing the restrictions and further liberalising the rules in other respects has not been agreed to by the Government of India. However, steps are being taken to pursuade the various ministries to throw open their records upto 1947. But because of certain difficulties the various Ministries have not agreed. However, they have given permission to many scholars to consult the post 1945 period records and in no case the permission was refused.

The views expressed regarding typing assistance to scholars, consultation of 'closed' period records, duplication of records, change of topics etc. are purely administrative problem. All assistance is being rendered to the scholars by the National Archives of India as far as practicable. The National Archives of India Research Rules are also being revised and due consideration is being given to the various difficulties experienced by the scholars.

The objectives behind this Resolution would command universal acceptance. But, in view of the details

mentioned above, it appears somewhat doubtful if much purpose would be served by passing this Resolution.

(D) Preservation of Records on rights of land

(4) Resolution by Dr. Durgaprasad Bhattacharya

"Resolved that the Records of Rights of land be preserved on a sample basis for selected mauzas of each State to represent each type of tenure, economic and ethnical groups of people as may be required by scholars in socio-economic historical studies. Resolved further that a committee be formed to examine various types of records of rights, their availability and the procedure of selecting sample villages in consultation with Director of Land Records of each state, appropriate department of Union Ministries, Central Statistical Organisation, Indian Council of Social Science Research, Indian Statistical Institute and Socio-Economic Research Institute, Calcutta which is conducting studies on records of rights."

Explanatory note:

Khatians or records of right contain a mine of information on the actual state of our agrarian relations. Growing subinfeudation had been a prominent feature of the tenural development in India following the Permanent and other contemporary Settlement. Subinfeudation and the creation of an intermediate interest on land is first reported to have occurred in Burdwan.

(Third Appendix to the Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons, London, 1832).